

“SEABEES REESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN GUANTANAMO BAY”

Story and photos by LT Scott Gustin

Guantanamo Bay Naval Station (GTMO), Cuba – It has been nearly 18 months since the gates were closed on the Seabee compound at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GTMO), when the demands of Operation Iraqi Freedom required a redistribution of efforts for the Naval Construction Force (NCF). But now, a detail of Seabees from U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FOUR (NMCB 4) has returned to GTMO where the residents expressed their happiness and pride to have “their” Seabees back.

An advance party of 13 personnel from NMCB 4 was sent to GTMO in early August with the relatively mundane, yet challenging task of reestablishing the detail site and preparing for construction operations to begin in mid-October when the rest of the detail is scheduled to arrive. However, within 72 hours of arrival, the Seabees were approached about the possibility of building SEAhuts to help house various electronic media equipment brought in by the recent influx of reporters here to cover the military commission hearings. Although undermanned for such a task, the Seabees of “Fabulous Four” were eager to make an impact and show what they could do.

The initial project called for a modified, air-conditioned SEAhut to be built within five days, with a second SEAhut to be ready three days later. However, with a full-time crew of six from NMCB 4, significant assistance from the Seabees of the Public Works Self-Help Shop, and additional support from the remainder of the detail, both SEAhuts were completed using portable lighting during the fourth evening.

“As a U.S Army Engineer, I was impressed with the Navy Seabees ‘Can-Do’ attitude and level of quality and expertise,” said CPT Michael Martin, Joint Task Force, Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) Engineering Officer. “These Structures are part of history and will be used for the U.S. Military Commissions for quite some time.”

During a short ceremony later that week, Command Sergeant Major, Angel Febles, of JTF-GTMO expressed the TF’s gratitude for efforts put forth by the Seabees. He presented several Certificates of Appreciation and command coins to the hard working detail from NMCB 4.

Chief Builder(SCW) David Tyson, Seabee Liaison for GTMO Public Works, who was present at the ceremony said, “this project was short fused and for the team to get the units ready, complete with floorboards, electrical wiring and air conditioning in four days shows their outstanding commitment and ‘Can-Do’ attitude.”

- NMCB 4 –

Photos



Seabees from NMCB 4 and the GTMO PWD completed two SEAhuts to house assorted media equipment waiting to be installed. (U.S. Navy Photo by LT Scott Gustin)



(Left to right) EOCN Bontrager, BU1 Eisfelder, and EA3 Bobby Knight, of NMCB 4 currently on a six-month deployment to GTMO, work at attaching the sheet metal roofing to the first SEAhut. (U.S. Navy Photo by LT Scott Gustin)



SW2 Sean Jackson, of NMCB 4, receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Angel Febles, JTF-GTMO, as a member of a small detail currently deployed to GTMO. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Scott Gustin)